



## Memorandum

**TO:** PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** Albert Balagso  
Stephen M. Haase

**SUBJECT: HOFFMAN/VIA MONTE  
STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS  
INITIATIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**DATE:** April 3, 2002

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COUNCIL DISTRICT: 10

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff advises the Planning Commission to recommend that the City Council: (1) Approve the *Hoffman/Via Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Implementation Plan* as the City/community vision for the future of the Hoffman/Via Monte neighborhood; (2) authorize the Administration to direct the City Departments and Agencies with implementation responsibilities to begin their respective activities, including the general oversight of the implementation of the *Plan* by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services; and (3) encourage the Hoffman/Via Monte property owners, residents and community members to dedicate their time, energy and resources to implement the recommendations of the *Plan* and continue their community building activities.

### **BACKGROUND**

**Hoffman/Via Monte Planning Area.** The Hoffman/Via Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative area is bordered by Almaden Expressway to the east, Blossom Hill Road to the north, Guadalupe Creek to the south, and the western border of Pioneer High School to the west. The northern portion of the area is comprised of neighborhood and regional commercial businesses and faith based organizations along Blossom Hill Road, and a housing stock that is exclusively fourplex units covers the rest of the area. There are 508 residential dwelling units in the study area.

The commercial uses in the neighborhood are located along Blossom Hill Road. Pueblo Plaza, located at the southwest corner of Blossom Hill Road and Almaden Expressway, currently includes a drugstore, restaurants, video store, and other neighborhood serving retail uses. There

is an auto parts and video rental store located in two buildings at the northeastern corner of Gallup Drive and Blossom Hill Road. A smaller retail center consisting of donut and bagel shops and telecommunications services is located at the northwestern corner of Gallup and Blossom Hill.

**Hoffman/Via Monte Planning Process and Participation.** The development of the Implementation Plan for the Hoffman/Via Monte neighborhood involved the following steps:

- ❑ Recognition of community assets and resources in the neighborhood through a series of community meetings, workshops, and outreach.
- ❑ Collection and documentation of information about the neighborhood, including physical conditions of structures and infrastructure.
- ❑ Community identification of top issues that face the neighborhood.
- ❑ Development of a clear and realistic vision for the future of the Hoffman/Via Monte neighborhood.
- ❑ Identification of the improvements and programs required to revitalize the Hoffman/Via Monte neighborhood.
- ❑ Development of an action plan for implementation of the planned improvements and programs.

In January 2001, community members met to identify issues in their neighborhood, and devised strategies for addressing those issues. A Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) was formed which includes residential tenants and property owners, business owners, and members of the faith community. A list of neighborhood priorities was created to reflect the top strategies that the neighborhood would like to have implemented in their community. NAC members finalized the priorities at their August 15, 2001 meeting.

## **ANALYSIS**

**Purposes of the Plan.** The purpose of the *Hoffman/Via Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Implementation Plan* is to identify the issues that detract from the quality of life in the Hoffman/Via Monte neighborhood and to develop a long term, comprehensive approach to creating a stronger neighborhood that is tailored to the needs and characteristics of the community.

**Vision.** The Plan communicates a clear vision for the neighborhood. Stakeholders in the Hoffman/ Via Monte area envision a neighborhood that is self-sufficient and contains leaders who are both residents and property owners.

### **Draft Plan.**

- A. The “Top Ten” Priority Actions. The “Top Ten” Priority Actions represent the short list of priority actions that the community selected as having the greatest potential for positive impact. Priority actions were chosen by community members at a workshop in December 2001 and are ranked in order of importance:

1. Establish a neighborhood center to provide supervised activities and programs for youth and adults.
2. To discourage crime, increase police presence by expanding current community policing efforts and addressing environmental design issues.
3. Maintain functioning lights in alleyways.
4. Create and implement an alleyway architectural design that addresses safety and other concerns and improves appearance.
5. Establish a joint tow agreement among property owners.
6. Explore the feasibility of joint beautification projects between property owners with a focus on improved landscaping.
7. Implement Neighborhood Watch.
8. Implement a Community Clean-up event.
9. Redesign the front drop-off area at Pioneer High School to reduce the stacking of cars onto Blossom Hill Road during peak hours.
10. Perform a lighting assessment to determine the need for additional street lighting or increased wattage on existing lights in the area near the proposed location of the neighborhood center.

B. Other Improvement Actions. In addition to the “Top Ten” Priority Actions, the community identified additional implementation items:

- Explore public transportation options at the school.
- Educate the community on the new shopping cart ordinance.
- Conduct a traffic study of identified streets.
- Strengthen the current property owners association and encourage the formation of additional property owner association(s) where none exist.
- Encourage and assist in the formation of a tenant or residents association.

### **Issues of Particular Note.**

Proposed Neighborhood Center. For over fifteen years, this community has been interested in a neighborhood center that focuses on the needs of its residents. Since March 2001, community residents and the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) have identified the creation of a neighborhood center as the number one action item for the Hoffman/Via Monte area.

In March 2001, PRNS conducted a survey to assess the types of programs that residents would like to see offered at the proposed neighborhood center. The survey is a valuable tool to determine the appropriate mix of programs and services to serve the community.

In anticipation of the passage of the *Plan*, budget monies totaling \$700,000 have been set aside since fiscal year 2000-2001 for the sole purpose of purchasing and installing a modular unit for the neighborhood center. The neighborhood center is expected to be located on the Pioneer High School campus between the Hoffman and Via Monte neighborhoods.

Improve Alleyway Architectural Design Throughout the Hoffman/Via Monte Area. As mentioned above, the residential portion of the Hoffman/Via Monte area is solely comprised of fourplex apartment buildings. Many of the apartment residents have parking available to them along private alleyways off the public streets of the neighborhood. Because of space limitations in these alleyways, there is not adequate room for all the automobiles, garbage dumpsters and recycling bins for each fourplex building. In addition, the private property lighting is dim or nonexistent, and the condition of the pavement and drainage systems varies from fair to poor.

These problems could be addressed through a redesign of the alleyways. Some of the specific improvements could include enclosures for the dumpsters, increased lighting, new pavement, and drainage improvements. Also, an alleyway design process should evaluate the existing parking configuration to determine if reconfiguration could provide additional parking stalls.

Joint Towing Agreement. The Almaden Recreation Club Home Owners Association (ARC HOA) recently established a joint towing agreement for their area that substantially lowers the cost and difficulties for the property owners to facilitate the prompt towing of cars in violation of parking policies. ARC HOA represents one-third of all the owners in the Hoffman/Via Monte SNI area, and the joint towing agreement involves one towing agreement with one towing company for all property owners within ARC HOA. It is hoped that the ARC HOA agreement will serve as a model for property owners in other areas of the neighborhood.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The *Plan* was developed in close coordination with members of the Hoffman/Via Monte Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) and community residents through more than one year of monthly Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings and periodic community workshops. All property owners and residents within the Hoffman/Via Monte area were invited to all community workshops and Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings through postcard mailers, flyers, and direct PRNS and PBCE contacts. Community members actively participated in each phase of the planning process.

## **COORDINATION**

The preparation of the *Plan* was coordinated with the District 10 Council Office, the City Manager's Office, and various Departments and Agencies, including the Departments of Planning Building and Code Enforcement; Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services; Transportation; Public Works; and Police as well as the Redevelopment Agency, and the San Jose Unified School District.

PLANNING COMMISSION

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## **CEQA**

An addendum was prepared to the San Jose 2020 General Plan Environmental Impact Report which was previously certified on August 16, 1994 by the City Council (Resolution Number 65459).

ALBERT BALAGSO, ACTING DIRECTOR	STEPHEN M. HAASE, DIRECTOR
Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services	Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

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